

# FLORIDA DISCOVERS THE SECRET TO EXPORTING SERVICES

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The service sector is a driving force in the U.S. economy, accounting for approximately 53 percent of GDP in 2000 and exports of services in 2000 were nearly 29 percent of total exports. Service providers have specialized needs and the agencies of the International Trade Administration are working to adapt support mechanisms to meet those needs. The innovative efforts in Florida provide insight to how several organizations have worked together to achieve promising results.

The Florida Services Export Program takes advantage of Florida's strategic geography and trading heritage to put the state in a leadership position to promote service exports.

Driven by Enterprise Florida, the state's premier public-private economic development organization, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to identify and assist Florida's service firms in tapping markets in the Western Hemisphere. Florida firms already have an affinity and tradition of trade with this hemisphere.

The Florida services export initiative is funded by the State of Florida and led by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC), which, as the third largest metropolitan Chamber of

Commerce in the United States, has been able to capitalize on its strong ties with similar organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The results are impressive. In the last three years alone, the GMCC's Services Missions have generated \$400 million in sales and investment. This results-oriented approach and artful integration of partners such as the Commercial Service and other units of the Department of Commerce has positioned the Chamber as a role model for export promotion of services.

## THE FLORIDA SERVICES EXPORT PROGRAM

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Enterprise Florida, Florida International University and the U.S. Commercial Service is pioneering the promotion and packaging of Florida's service sector with a variety of initiatives intended to position Florida as the United States' premier exporter of services. The Florida Services Export Program (FSEP) has five major components:

**1. Florida Service Network:** The Florida Service Network (FSN) is a statewide partnership encompassing over 60 business organizations, such as chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and trade associations.

**2. FloridaServiceNet.com.** As the first statewide on-line business center serving Florida service providers and their counterpart interests worldwide, [www.FloridaServiceNet.com](http://www.FloridaServiceNet.com) uses a custom designed database of services industry classifications.

**3. Florida Service Missions:** In the three years since the program's inception, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce has organized a number of inbound and outbound missions with a number of countries throughout Latin America, making extensive use of the U.S. Commercial Service's overseas contacts and matchmaking Gold Key Service.

**4. Institute for International Professional Services (IIPS):** Located at Florida International University (FIU), IIPS is conducting research on the services sector and developing economic impact assessments that are helping state government and other organizations allocate resources for based upon needs.

**5. Educational Seminars:** The FSEP organizes seminars and briefings as well as networking events in Florida and abroad to (a) draw service sector firms to explore export opportunities; (b) inform them of such opportunities and; (c) provide a forum to network and promote business.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY — FLORIDA'S LEADING EDGE IN PROMOTING SERVICES EXPORTS

While the FSEP has engaged a broad spectrum of services industries, Florida's emerging role as an information technology (IT) center has led to special emphasis on firms involved in e-business.

The U.S.-Argentina Strategic Partners Conference held in March 2001 at Florida International University demonstrated the potential of this sector. Forty Argentine information technology companies were matched with Florida partners during the conference. This event was a collaborative effort drawing on the resources of International Trade Administration, the Argentine Government, InternetCoast, Enterprise Florida and

affiliated with the Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) and the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), participated in both the Florida conference and the Governor's trade mission with good result. The March conference established linkages that have further positioned FIU as a major educational services provider and exporter.

One result was the 'Americas E-Business Education and Training Initiative,' co-signed by representatives of FIU's College of Business Administration, the University of Buenos Aires' (UBA) School of Economic Sciences and Argentine e-business firm Competir.com during the July, 2001 trade mission to Argentina led by Governor Bush. According to Dr. Eduardo Gamarra, director of the Institute for

can be attributed to their integrated approach with partners like the Commercial Service, arranging market information, assisting planning and providing on the ground support.

Recognized as a unique effort on the national and international scene, the GMCC has discussed their experiences with other U.S. regions interested in collaboration and have been featured in services-oriented field training for the U.S. Commercial Service.

Most importantly, however, is the strong leadership and long term commitment by Governor Bush's Enterprise Florida and top management at the GMCC and FIU that are playing a significant role in creating business opportunities and strengthening awareness internationally of Florida as a premier location for world class

**"WITH THE PIVOTAL ROLE PLAYED BY THE SERVICES SECTOR IN FLORIDA'S ECONOMY, OUR STATE IS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN THE EXPORT OF SERVICES. FROM TRADE MISSIONS TO ON-LINE BUSINESS CENTERS, THE FLORIDA SERVICES EXPORT PROGRAM ILLUSTRATES OUR STATE'S GROWING RANGE OF TACTICS TO HELP ENSURE THAT FLORIDA SERVICE FIRMS HAVE A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THIS IS AN INTEGRATED EFFORT, LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE AND OTHERS IN SUPPORT OF FLORIDA'S WORLD CLASS SERVICE COMPANIES.**

**—JEB BUSH, GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA**

FIU. It was a perfect demonstration of Florida as a strategic venue for linking U.S. service industry firms with suitable partners in Argentina.

In July 2001, Governor Bush led an Enterprise Florida mission to Chile and Argentina, which further demonstrated Florida's emergence as a global leader in information technology. The Ft. Lauderdale Export Assistance Center was pivotal in elevating the importance of the information technology sector of Florida and as a result, numerous IT companies participated in the governor's mission.

A partner and lately an outstanding example of the overall Florida effort, Florida International University's Institute of Professional Services,

International Professional Services, "this agreement serves as a guiding force of a vision to develop an international partnership for post-graduate education that combines the application of information technology with strong business skills and knowledge."

## A MODEL PROGRAM

Services are at the helm of Florida's economic development. Representing over 78 percent of the state's annual gross state product, the FSEP's comprehensive strategy offers clear benefits to the individual service provider and the state of Florida. In Florida, smaller businesses can explore the potential of international markets through a single source. Much of the FSEP's past success in generating export transactions

services. As GMCC executive Marisa Feito says with unquestioned enthusiasm, "Florida has every reason to be a gateway for services trade just as it has traditionally been as a portal for selling goods. The difference is that Florida is now predominantly a service sector state. With leading service companies located here from all over the Hemisphere, with our great universities, our great partnerships and our Governor's great devotion to promoting Florida's services, there is no doubt that the sun will shine all the more brightly on services for a long time to come." ■

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